

MEETING MINUTES
Stow Green Advisory Committee
Thursday, December 02, 2021

Stow Town Building
1st Floor Whitney Room
380 Great Road
Stow, MA

Committee Members Attending:

Arnie Epstein – Committee Chair, Energy Manager, Sharon Brownfield – Vice Chair, Appointed by Energy Manager, Carol Lynn – Clerk, Resident At-Large Representative for the Select Board, Bob Collings – EDIC, George Peterman – Resident At-Large, John Sangermano – Resident At-Large

Absent:

Tom Porcher – Conservation Commission, John Colonna-Romano – Planning Board, Michael Naill – Zoning Board of Appeals

Residents Attending:

Kate Fisher – 1 White Pond Road

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm

Agenda

1. Review of minutes from 11-04-2021.

- a. Bob suggested HLPD be listed as a standing agenda item going forward
- b. Move for approval – Sharon
- c. Seconded – George
- d. All – unanimous Aye

2. Resident Items

- a. Katie mentioned appreciation for work the committee is doing.
- b. She mentioned that the 11-04-21 minutes were not up on the web site.

3. Concord Update

- a. Sharon interviewed Susan Richardson, a member of Mothers Out Front and the Energy Future Task Force founded by the town manager.
 - i. Article 51 was established which funded development of a climate plan. This article was also instrumental in driving town education regarding sustainability principles (below).
 - ii. Concord adopted four sustainability principles:
 - 1. Reduce dependence upon fossil fuels, underground metals, and minerals;

2. Reduce dependence upon synthetic chemicals and other manufactured substances;
 3. Reduce encroachment upon nature; and
 4. Meet human needs fairly and efficiently; and to ask the Town Manager and Department Heads to report on methods and successes in implementing sustainable principles and balancing reductions in order to meet human needs fairly and efficiently.
- iii. Town education included:
 1. Presentation and FAQ guide. Asked for 2 pledges.
 2. Will you pledge to vote for the article?
 3. Will you help us?
 - iv. Identified moms who care about the environment. Trained them through house parties, pushed the pledge.
 - v. Educated the schools.
 - vi. Key Learnings for success:
 1. The power of the pledge
 2. Involve the schools
 3. Involve the parents
 4. Work with other green communities
- b. Interview with Brian Fould, who serves on Concord's light board and on the Article 51 task force.
 - i. After the warrant passed, Concord hired a Sustainability Manager (who quit during the pandemic), formed the Green Advisory Board (Concord residents), and a Municipal committee..
 - ii. The Sustainability director was key to getting the Climate Action Plan (CAP) done.
 1. Concord received \$100,000 from the MVP program for developing the CAP.
 2. They looked at what was possible and achievable.
 3. The CAP was presented to the Select Board, then to town departments
 - c. New sustainability manager is in charge of a dashboard that tracks where they are to plan.
 - d. Concord received \$75,000 to put in multi-level charging.
 - e. Key take-aways:
 - i. Hospitals were the most hostile to the CAP.
 - ii. Having a dedicated sustainability staff person was key (they received a grant to fund this position for 1 ½ years. Salary range is \$75,000-\$85,000.
 - f. Concord's goal is 100% carbon free, which is difficult to achieve. George mentioned that one way to do this is with renewable energy credits or nuclear energy (Massachusetts classifies nuclear energy as "clean" energy.)
 - g. The Chief of Police has bought a model Y Tesla as an administrative vehicle.
 - h. Concord was up front with educating the residents that electricity rates will go up since their Muni light plant will be providing some funding.

- i. Arnie compared Concord's 2012 and 2018 plans, recommended we look at Concord's plan, which is in the Google drive:
 - i. Concord has similar categories as Stow.
 - ii. They made substantial progress with their Municipal Light Plant
 - iii. Made little progress with Transportation.
 - iv. Made a little progress in Housing (houses went from fuel oil to natural gas).
 - v. Bob suggested we review other town's plans to see what worked, Sharon will do this for Concord's plan.

4. Acton Update:

- a. Carol interviewed Andrea Becerra, Acton's Sustainability Manager on 11-29-2021. The discussion consisted mostly about their process in developing the town's Climate Action Plan. Below is a high-level summary of the discussion. A detailed summary can be found in the Acton filedrawer in the GAG Google drive.
- b. Andrea's first task is to create a five-to-ten-year Climate Action Plan for Acton. The main focus is on energy waste reduction goals (eg, decreasing GHG emissions) and nature-based solutions. Also involved to various degrees are the Acton Climate Coalition, Energize Acton, and the Green Advisory board. The select board is looped into climate planning.
- c. The overall goal is for an aggressive target of net 0 GHG emissions by 2030 as voted on in a special town meeting. More specific goals are not listed in the currently available draft of the Climate Action Plan available online. The current plan is process oriented.
- d. Some mitigation/resilience issues are in the Climate Action Plan (CAP), such as strategies related to water. MAPC is working with Acton and suggested that resilience be added to the mitigation plan and not be a focus of the net-zero plan.
- e. To develop the CAP, Acton had nine public events, starting with "envisionary workshops." There were six theme-oriented workshops, 2 sets each on three key themes (Buildings and Clean Energy, Nature-based Solutions, Mobility), to collect input. The other three events were the open house at Nara Park where residents prioritized strategies in five themes (Buildings, Mobility, Energy, Nature-based solutions, and Education), a workshop to get feedback on implementation, and a nature walk & talk, which was a casual way to get input on the strategies.
- f. The main sectors of the Acton CAP are buildings, energy, mobility, nature-based solutions. There are strategies for each sector in the CAP.
- g. Education has risen as a priority in the CAP. Running across all sectors are communication to and education for town residents regarding the plan. Once the CAP process is completed, they will have a push for education via meetings, Facebook, and Twitter.
- h. Team members met with Town committees, town groups, advocacy groups, and other community members to get their input/suggestions. (see interview document for more details).
- i. Challenges:

- i. getting enough diversity in the interview process.
 - ii. meeting with a renter focus group.
 - iii. including students, since they have their own climate task force
 - iv. Getting enough information from town parents.
- j. A public survey regarding the plan was sent to all residents. Flyers, ads, and social media were used to reach out to residents.
- k. Since they didn't have a HeatSmart program, they are partnering with Abode for home electrification.
- l. Acton has a climate action plan blog, where the Sustainability Manager posts strategies. Anyone can read this. Residents then provide feedback via email.
- m. Acton's draft Climate Action Plan, Goals and Strategies, November 29, 2021, can be found here, and in the GAC google drive:
 - i. https://www.acton-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7356/CAP-Draft-Goals-and-Strategies_FINAL_1129
- n. Further action items:
 - i. Carol will follow up with Andrea regarding:
 - 1. Whether Acton has identified numerical targets for emissions reductions in the CAP (the current plan on their blog is process – oriented).
 - 2. What other resources are available for funding.
 - ii. Carol will find out if they have a baseline inventory (done - A 2019 GHG inventory was done by Cadmus and can be found in the GAC Google drive).
 - iii. What actions have worked the best?

5. Additional discussion:

- a. Bob met with Kelly Brown, Green Communities. Chief Sallese visited her and she thought they might be able to help with funding.
- b. Bob suggested that all handouts to be discussed are sent out to the committee members ahead of time.
 - i. The committee members agreed to:
 - 1. Send out documents ahead of time to all committee members.
 - 2. Place documents in the GAC Google drive (Carol and Sharon will do this).
 - 3. The committee will try this for 60 days and revise the procedure afterwards if necessary.
 - ii. Bob motioned we accept this decision, ayes were unanimous.

6. Scope of Stow's Climate Action Plan

- a. Arnie met with Jesse Steadman, Town Planner.
 - i. Jesse would like the Green Advisory Committee to take on adaptation and resiliency as part of the Climate Action Plan scope, as well as mitigation.
 - ii. Jessie is the founder of the Climate Coalition in the MAGIC region, which is mostly focused on water issues.
 - iii. Bob suggested we have Jesse speak with us.

- iv. Arnie will invite Jesse to our next meeting.
- v. Arnie will speak with Denise regarding ARPA funds. Can they be applied to adaptation, mitigation, and resiliency?

7. Update on New Housing Development

- a. Per Jesse Steadman, the developer of Athens Lane is open to build some or all of the new housing with energy efficiencies.
- b. Per the presentation a few weeks ago regarding Stow Acres, that developer is hoping to build energy efficient housing.
- c. Neither of these are certain but Arnie is moderately encouraged that they are considering energy efficient housing.
- d. Legal requirements for energy efficient housing is still in the State Legislature.
- e. George wants to look into the feasibility of Stow submitting a home rule petition to be able to mandate that all new housing is fossil fuel free.
- f. Carol will post Acton's home rule petition into the Google drive.

8. MAPC

- a. January is probably the date for the MAPC consultant/project manager to start providing tech support to Stow's Climate Advisory Committee.
- b. MAPC has a useful resource that Sharon will advise the committee on at the next meeting.

9. Library HVAC

- a. New HVAC for Randall Library is in the conceptual stage as part of the renovation project.
- b. Tina McAndrew invited the GAC to have a team member join their renovation group.
- c. There will be a spring warrant article for funds detailing the library renovation.
- d. Arnie mentioned that the town has been reasonably successful with retrofitting old buildings with heat pumps. He suggested that at the next meeting we discuss whether we want to ask the select board to pass a resolution to not allow new Municipal construction or major renovations use fossil fuel heating.

10. Meeting Agenda for December 16, 2021

- a. Review of minutes from 12-02-2021.
- b. Resident's Items
- c. Jesse Steadman, Town Planner, will speak with the committee via Zoom regarding:
 - i. Clarification requested at our last meeting about the role of the Planning Board for adaptation and resilience.
 - ii. Status of the new developments – Stow Acres and Athens Lane.

- d. Discussion whether to ask Select Board to adopt a resolution requiring new and renovated municipal buildings to not use fossil fuel heating.
- e. Meeting structure, topic prioritization, overall goals, and timelines.
- f. HLPD

11. Adjourned at 9:00 pm